

James S. Clemens House
1849 Cass Avenue
St. Louis
St. Louis City County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1163-A

HABS
MO
96-SALU
55-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. MO-1163-A

JAMES S. CLEMENS HOUSE

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Address: 1849 Cass Avenue, St. Louis, St. Louis City
County, Missouri

Present Owner: Vincentian (Roman Catholic) Missionary Society

Present Occupant: Vincentian Brothers

Present Use: Monastery

Brief Statement of Significance: This is a large country house, built by James S. Clemens, an uncle of Mark Twain, in 1860.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: James S. Clemens (married to Eliza Mullanphy). His heirs in 1885 sold it to the Roman Catholic Diocese which operated it until 1949 as an orphanage. Home of Vincentian Foreign Missionaries.
2. Date of erection: 1860
3. Architect: Patrick Walsh
4. Notes on alterations and additions: Large wing on rear added in 1880's for cells. Wing to east of building contains chapel and rooms for orphans.
5. Source of information: Mrs. F. P. Hardaway, 53 Arundel Place, St. Louis 5, Missouri.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: Legend has it that the woman's head decorating many of the overdoors and over windows is the head of Eliza Mullanphy Clemens, who died just before Mr. Clemens built the house.

Prepared by Robert G. Stewart, Architect
for the Landmarks Inc. Association
of St. Louis - October 1960.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a large, two-story, brick country house with cast-iron, Classic Revival ornament.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: 45' x 60' original house, two-and-a-half stories.
2. Foundations: Stone
3. Wall construction: Brick with cast-iron quoins.
4. Porches: Two-story porch with cast-iron columns and ornament. Ionic columns on pedestals on first floor; Roman Doric columns on pedestals on second floor; gable porch roof with brick pediment. Small circular window in pediment over portico.
5. Chimneys: Brick
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Cast iron frames with wooden doors. Etched glass panels in doors.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Window frames, ornamented with cast iron bust supposedly of Eliza Mullanphy Clemens. Corniced overwindows on first floor; segmental pediments on second floor windows. Folding, louvered and shuttered interior shutters.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Hipped, copper covering.
 - b. Cornice: Cast-iron modillion cornice with denticulated bed course.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Center hall with four large rooms on each floor. Ell wing has been built into large dormitory extension at rear.

2. Stairways: Wood, three stories, open string, straight run stair in center hall. Landing at second floor level connects to chapel at east of building.
3. Flooring: Alternating maple and walnut, probably added in 1885.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster
5. Doorways and doors: Heavily carved over doors, some pediments with denticulated cornices.
6. Trim: Plaster medallions for chandeliers. One door in wing has cast-iron and plaster cornice.
7. Lighting: Fluorescent.
8. Heating: Originally fireplaces with cast-iron coal burning fittings. Central heating fittings modern.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: Faces south on a large, open, level lot.
2. Enclosures: Wall built circa 1885.
3. Outbuildings: Chapel and dormitories added for the use of the religious orders which have occupied the building.
4. Walks, driveways, etc.: Original circular drive.
5. Landscaping: Neglected -- lawn, shrubs, trees.

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